



Preliminary Report on  
**BLM Lands Deserving Protection**  
as National Conservation Areas, Wilderness  
or Other Conservation Designations

November 2011





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## Introduction

Over the years, Congress has recognized the need to protect some of America's special places on our Nation's vast public lands. When designating these areas, Members of Congress worked closely with their constituents to develop legislation that was based on strong local support. Many of these lands have been designated as wilderness areas that will be protected for future generations. In other cases, Congress determined that certain landscapes should be protected as national conservation areas or similar types of designations. All of these conservation efforts are tailored to specific landscapes and often protect a wide-range of traditional, local uses.

There is a long history of bipartisan support in Congress for the conservation of America's special places. Members from both parties have been essential to passing every major public lands bill that has been enacted in recent years, including the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (P.L.111-11). Included in that landmark legislation—which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support—was the creation of four national conservation areas, the protection of more than 1,000 miles of rivers, and the designation of wilderness areas in 9 different states.

This type of cooperative and bipartisan approach to designating special lands for protection as wilderness, national conservation areas, or similar designations has historically been a regular practice for Congress. In this spirit, many Members of Congress have expressed an interest in moving forward with additional designations for certain treasured places. Therefore, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar directed Deputy Secretary David J. Hayes to work with BLM Director Bob Abbey to prepare a report identifying BLM-managed lands that may be appropriate candidates for immediate congressional action. In executing this task, broad input was solicited from Congress, state and local officials, tribes, and Federal land managers. These individuals were asked to help identify areas where there is strong local support for conservation designations.

This report responds to Secretary Salazar's request. The report identifies a number of special places on BLM lands for which there is local, regional, and often national support for congressional action. In many cases, legislative proposals have already been put forward by Members of Congress, tailored to the lands in question. Those proposals range in size and scope. In some cases the proposals are focused on wilderness designations, while others are oriented toward other designations that are also compatible with the long-term enjoyment and conservation of these areas.

Two further points must be emphasized. First, this report does not purport to identify all lands that deserve congressional action. To the contrary, there are a large number of well-deserving, additional candidates for congressional action. The areas identified in this report are put forward by the Department of the Interior as some of the most compelling candidates for immediate congressional action. All of them are spectacular landscapes that have garnered local and regional interest. While there are many additional areas that deserve attention, and that certainly could (and perhaps should) have been included, this report provides an important starting point for discussions on Capitol Hill. Second, this report does not constitute a proposal for legislation or agency action and has no effect on the current management of any of the areas described.



## Introduction

The National Congress has recognized the need to protect some of America's most valuable natural resources. When Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge Act in 1906, it was the first time that the Federal Government had taken action to protect wildlife and their habitats. Since that time, the number of National Wildlife Refuges has grown to over 100, and the total area protected is over 100 million acres. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a vital part of our Nation's natural heritage, and it is the responsibility of the Department of the Interior to manage these lands for the benefit of present and future generations.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is a collection of lands and waters managed by the Department of the Interior for the benefit of the Nation. The system includes a variety of lands and waters, including wetlands, riparian areas, and coastal areas. The system also includes a variety of wildlife, including birds, mammals, and reptiles. The system is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is part of the Department of the Interior. The Service is responsible for the day-to-day management of the system, including the protection of wildlife and their habitats, and the management of the lands and waters.

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## Arizona

Arizona has a strong tradition of bipartisan, collaborative work to balance conservation and development on public lands. In the 1980s, the Arizona Congressional Delegation worked together to pass two landmark bills that established 47 wilderness areas, covering nearly 1.4 million acres of BLM land in Arizona. The first, the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984 (P.L.98-406), focused primarily on northern Arizona. Crafted by Congressman Morris K. Udall (D-AZ) and Senators Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) and Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ), the bill was the product of a remarkable collaboration among miners, ranchers, conservationists, private landowners, and others. The Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984 resulted in the designation of the world-renowned Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness and several other wilderness areas that are widely used and enjoyed today.

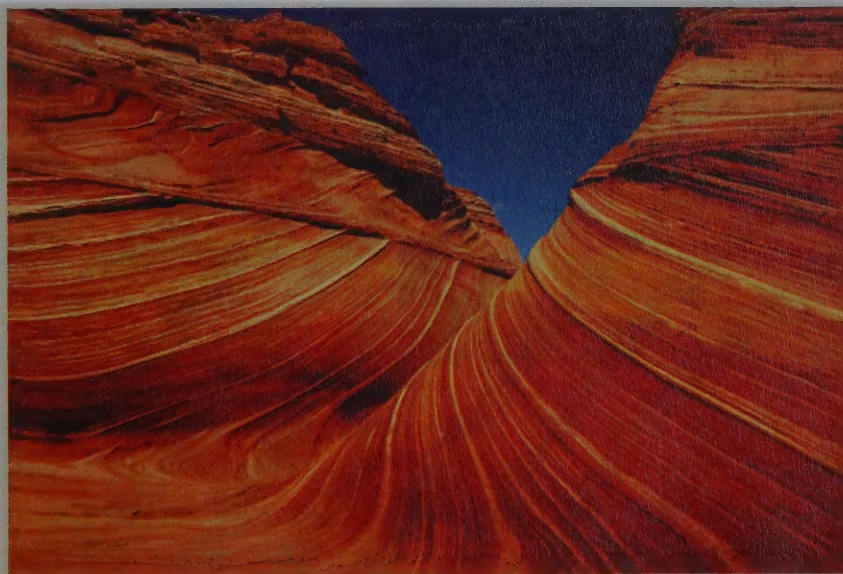
In the late 1980s, the Arizona Congressional Delegation again stepped forward to work on public land and conservation issues. Together they facilitated a collaborative process that resulted in recommendations for BLM wilderness designations for the rest of Arizona. The product of that effort was the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 (P.L.101-628).

These two wilderness laws stand as guiding examples of how stakeholders, local communities, and elected officials can work together to resolve challenging public lands issues and protect special areas for future generations.

There are opportunities to build on these early conservation successes in Arizona, but we have not included any specific recommendations for this state in this report. Instead, we encourage congressional delegations around the West to follow the model that was used to great effect in Arizona.

### Arizona

- ~12 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup>
- 47 BLM wilderness areas (~1.4 million acres)<sup>1</sup>
- 8 BLM national conservation areas or similar designations (~1.9 million acres)<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately \$2 billion in annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup>





Arizona has a strong tradition of bipartisan, collaborative work to balance conservation and development on public lands. In the 1980s the Arizona Congressional Delegation worked together to pass two landmark bills that established 27 wilderness areas, covering nearly 1.4 million acres of BLM land in Arizona. The first, the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-582), focused exclusively on Western Arizona. Cited by Congressman Morris K. Udall (D-AZ) and Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) and Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ), the bill was the product of a remarkable collaboration among many Arizona conservationists, private landowners, and others. The Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984 resulted in the designation of the world-renowned Grand Canyon-Parashant, Grand Staircase-Escalante, and several other wilderness areas that are widely loved and enjoyed today.

In the late 1980s, the Arizona Congressional Delegation again stepped forward to work on public land and conservation issues. Together they facilitated a collaborative process that resulted in recommendations for Grand Wilderness designations for the west of Arizona. The product of that effort was the Grand Staircase-Escalante Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-509).

These two wilderness areas stand as shining examples of how stakeholders, local communities, and elected officials can work together to resolve challenging public lands issues and protect special areas for future generations.

From the opportunities to build on these early conservation successes in Arizona, but we have not achieved any desired recommendations for this state in this report. Instead, we encourage congressional leadership across the West to follow the model that was used to great effect in Arizona.

- 1.3 million acres to BLM
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- 1.5 million acres
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- 9.9 million acres
- 10.0 million acres



## California

### Beauty Mountain Wilderness Study Area

The Beauty Mountain area is a spectacular, arid landscape characterized by stands of Coulter pine and live oak in the higher elevations and chaparral and desert scrub in the lower elevations. It provides habitat for southern mule deer, golden eagle, bobcat, American badger, and gray fox, among other species. Cultural sites have been found around some of the Mountain's numerous water sources. Visitors to Beauty Mountain enjoy a range of scenic vistas, including views of Toto Peak and Mount San Jacinto to the north and the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park immediately to the east. The area is included in the Beauty Mountain and Agua Tibia Act of 2011, H.R.41/



S.1574 (Issa, R-CA/Boxer, D-CA). The Beauty Mountain area is split between Riverside and San Diego Counties

and also between Representative Mary Bono Mack's district and Representative Darrell Issa's district. The half in Rep. Bono Mack's district was designated as wilderness in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (P.L.111-11). The Beauty Mountain and Agua Tibia Act of 2011 would nearly double the size of the existing wilderness.

### California

- ~15.5 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup>
- 85 BLM wilderness areas (~3.9 million acres)<sup>1</sup>
- 6 BLM national conservation areas or similar designations (~350,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately \$4 billion in annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup>

### The California Desert—Sand to Snow, Mojave Trails, Avawatz Mountains, Great Falls Basin, Golden Valley and Other Conservation Designations

The vast California desert, which includes more than 10 million acres of public land managed by the BLM, is a short drive from the San Diego and Los Angeles metropolitan areas. It is a haven for outdoor recreation and is home to some of California's most stunning and fragile desert landscapes. U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein's California Desert Protection Act of 2011 (S.138)

proposes an array of new conservation designations for lands within this area. These proposed designations include the Sand to Snow and Mojave Trails areas, the Avawatz Mountains Wilderness, the Great Falls Basin Wilderness, the Golden Valley Wilderness, additions to two existing wilderness areas, and three additions to the Wild and Scenic River System that cross lands managed by the Bureau of Land









Management. Some of the special qualities found in these areas include diverse desert and mountain wildlife, large sections of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, and landscapes that range from snow-covered peaks to rich wetlands to desert lowlands. The California Desert Protection Act of 2011 is supported by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors as well as numerous other local government officials, non-profit organizations, and others. The Administration testified in support of these designations in May 2010.

### **English Ridge**

The English Ridge area, located in the Coast Range in Northern California's Mendocino County, is a remote and rugged landscape of steep mountains covered with a mosaic of old-growth Douglas fir forests, chaparral, and grasslands. Fish Creek, Indian Creek, and other smaller streams flow through fog-shrouded canyons before entering the Wild and Scenic Eel River in the southern and western portions of the area. These streams



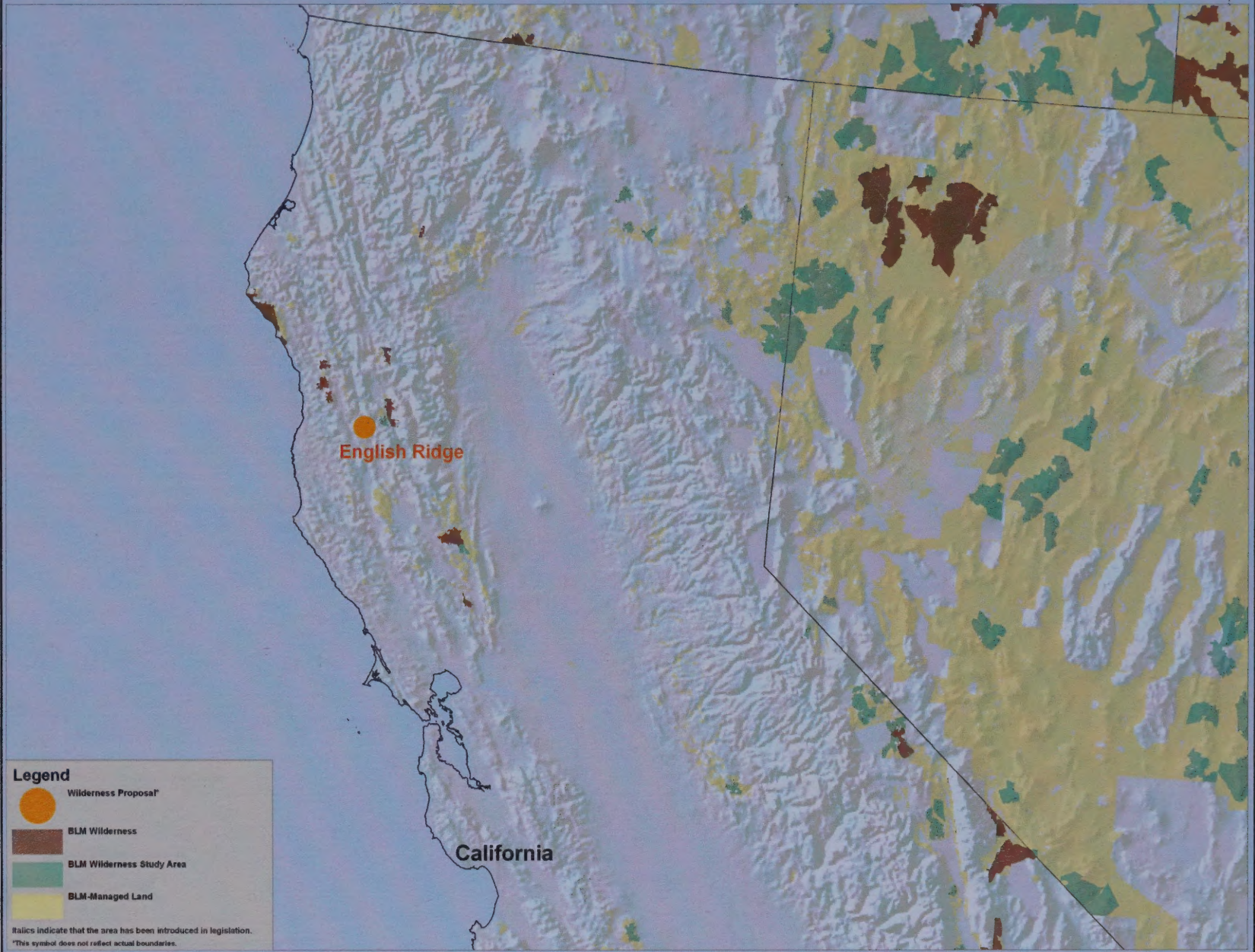
provide habitat for threatened salmon and steelhead trout, which make their way up from the Pacific to spawning grounds shaded by towering Douglas fir and lined with dense willow thickets. The primary access into the English Ridge area is from the Eel River, which offers kayaking and rafting opportunities to adventurous visitors. The Mendocino County Supervisor for the English Ridge area supports designation of this area as wilderness.











# Northern California



## Legend

-  Wilderness Proposal\*
-  BLM Wilderness
-  BLM Wilderness Study Area
-  BLM-Managed Land

*Italics indicate that the area has been introduced in legislation.*  
*\*This symbol does not reflect actual boundaries.*

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12N

November 2011

0 25 50 100 Miles

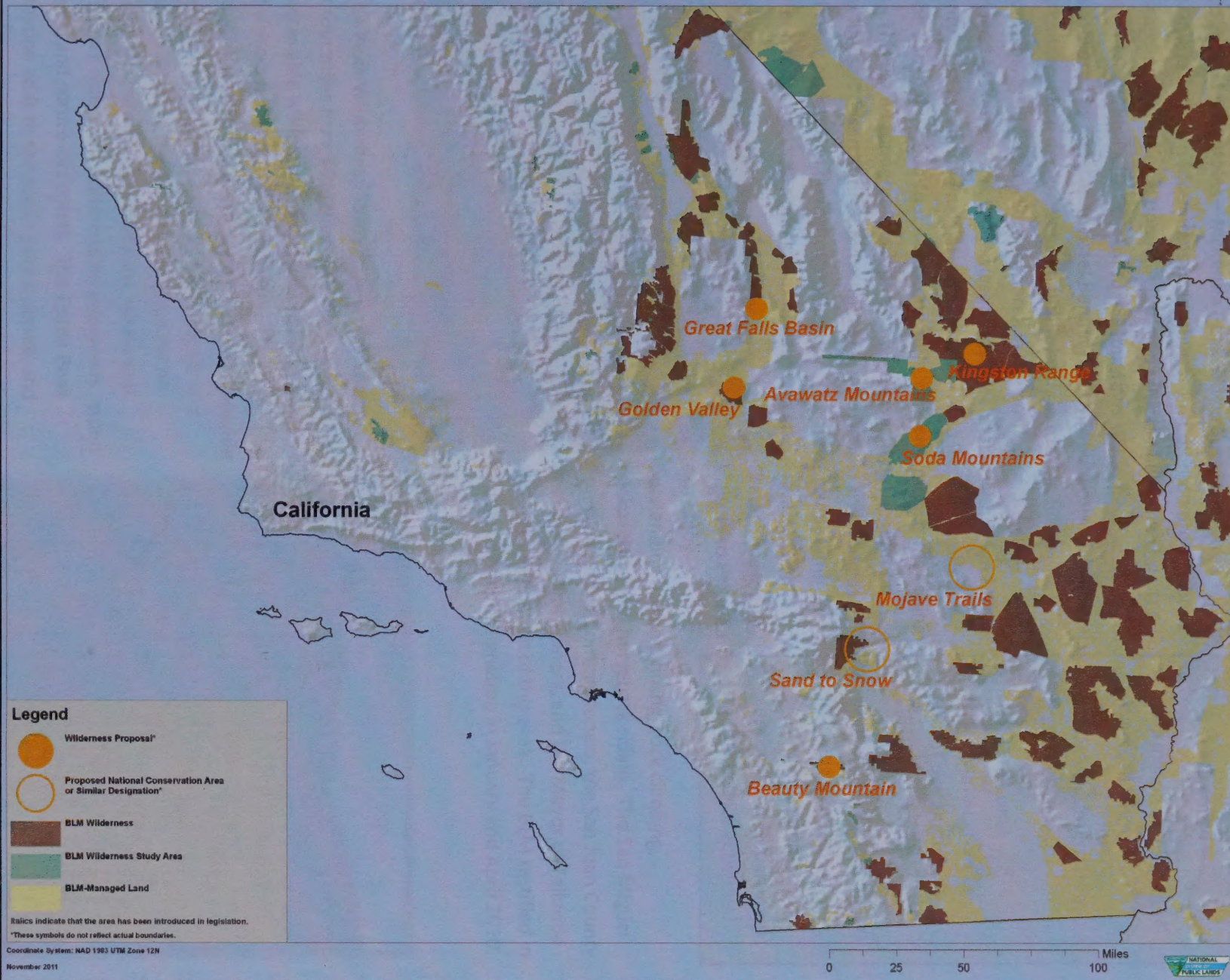








# Southern California





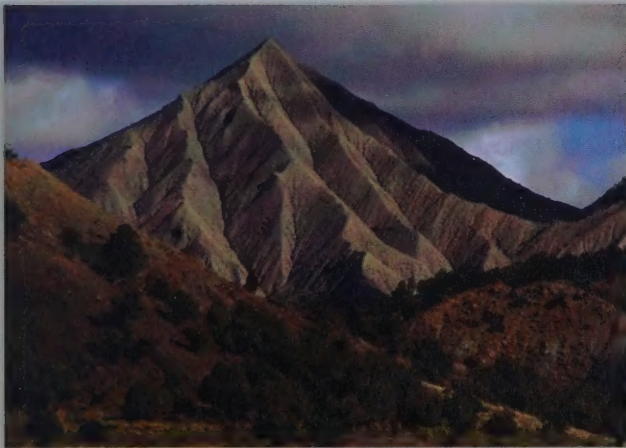




## Colorado

### The San Juan Mountains—McKenna Peak Wilderness Study Area

The rugged San Juan Mountains in southwestern Colorado provide both outstanding recreational opportunities and critical wildlife habitat. U.S. Senator Mark Udall's (D-CO) San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act (S.1635), co-sponsored by Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO), would establish several new conservation designations on public lands in the San Juan Mountains, including a wilderness area in the portion of the BLM-managed McKenna Peak Wilderness Study Area that is within San Miguel County. The McKenna Peak Wilderness Study Area includes eroded adobe badlands, 2,000-foot sandstone cliffs, canyons, mesas, and rolling hills. This varied topography supports a wide diversity of vegetation, including salt desert shrubs, pinyon-juniper woodlands, and Douglas fir, oakbrush, and mountain mahogany forests. The area provides important winter habitat for large populations of deer and elk. It is also rich in Cretaceous fossils.



Visitors to the area can enjoy

outstanding hunting, hiking, rock climbing, backpacking, and horseback riding. The San Miguel County Board of Commissioners, the San Juan County Board of Commissioners, and the Mayor of Telluride support designation of this area. The BLM testified in support of this designation in January and April 2010.

### Colorado

- ~8.5 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup>
- 5 BLM wilderness areas (~200,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- 4 BLM national conservation areas or similar designations (~550,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately \$1.3 billion in annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup>

### Castle Peak Wilderness Study Area and Addition

Just four miles from I-70, the Castle Peak area offers an accessible wilderness experience to Coloradans and visitors from around the Country. The rich foraging grounds and deep forest found here provide superb elk calving and summer range for elk and deer. As a result, the area is renowned for its spectacular hunting opportunities. Hikers and horseback riders can explore open grasslands, aspen groves, and spruce-fir forests. The Castle Peak formation adds to the area's scenic appeal and provides a visual reference for visitors throughout









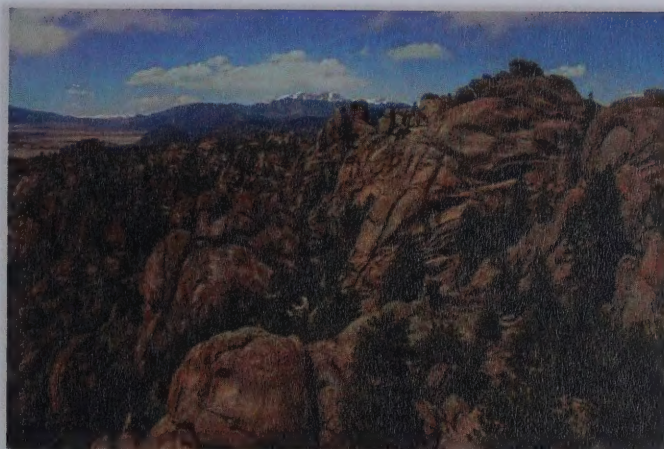
the area. The Eagle County Board of Commissioners and the Summit County Board of Commissioners support designation of this area as wilderness. This area is included in multiple legislative proposals, including the Eagle and Summit County Wilderness Preservation Act, H.R.1701 (Polis, D-CO).

### **Browns Canyon Wilderness Study Area**

The Browns Canyon Wilderness Study Area is the backdrop for one of the Nation's most popular whitewater rafting destinations. Whether floating the Arkansas River or hiking through the rugged terrain, visitors can enjoy the area's striking red hoodoos, dramatic gulches, and abundant wildlife.

The Browns Canyon area provides important wintering grounds for deer and elk, as well as habitat for a thriving population of reintroduced bighorn sheep. In addition to whitewater rafting,

the area offers outstanding hunting, fishing, hiking, and backpacking. Numerous local stakeholders have endorsed the Browns Canyon Wilderness proposal, including the Chaffee County Board of Commissioners, Arkansas River Outfitters Association, Buffalo Peaks Back Country Horsemen, Collegiate Peaks Trout Unlimited, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Colorado Wilderness Network, and the Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition. This area is included in current legislation and was also proposed for wilderness designation in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress by then-Senator Ken Salazar.



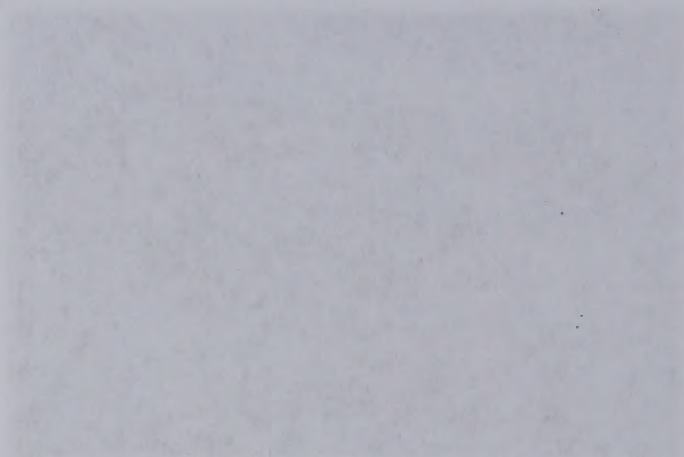
### **Bull Gulch Wilderness Study Area**

The Bull Gulch Wilderness Study Area is a land of stark contrasts. The area ranges from an alpine ecosystem to arid red rock canyon country. The Colorado River cuts through Bull Gulch's colorful sandstone formations, enhancing the strikingly scenic landscape and providing whitewater rafting and kayaking opportunities. The area is also known for its diverse wildlife, including prairie falcons, bald eagles, grouse, elk, and deer. Visitors can enjoy prime hunting opportunities, as well as photography, hiking, and bird watching. The Bull Gulch Wilderness Study Area also features cultural sites such as ancient campsites with lithic scatter. The Eagle County Board of Commissioners and the Summit County Board of Commissioners support designation of this area. This area is included in multiple legislative proposals, including the Eagle and Summit County Wilderness Preservation Act, H.R.1701 (Polis, D-CO).





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#### Brown Canyon Wilderness Study Area

The Brown Canyon Wilderness Study Area is the second largest of the nation's most popular wilderness setting designations. Whereas floating the Colorado River on the edge of the rugged terrain, visitors can enjoy the area's striking red rock formations, abundant wildlife, and abundant wildlife. The Brown Canyon area provides important wildlife habitat for deer and elk, as well as habitat for a variety of populations of reintroduced fish and wildlife. In addition to water, the area is a

major source of water for irrigation, fishing, hunting, and backpacking. Numerous local stakeholders have supported the Brown Canyon Wilderness proposal, including the Colorado County Board of Commissioners, the Colorado River Water Conservation District, the Colorado River Water Conservation District, the Colorado River Water Conservation District, the Colorado River Water Conservation District, and the Central Colorado Water Conservancy. This area is included in current legislation and was also proposed for wilderness designation in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress by Rep. Senator Ken Salazar.

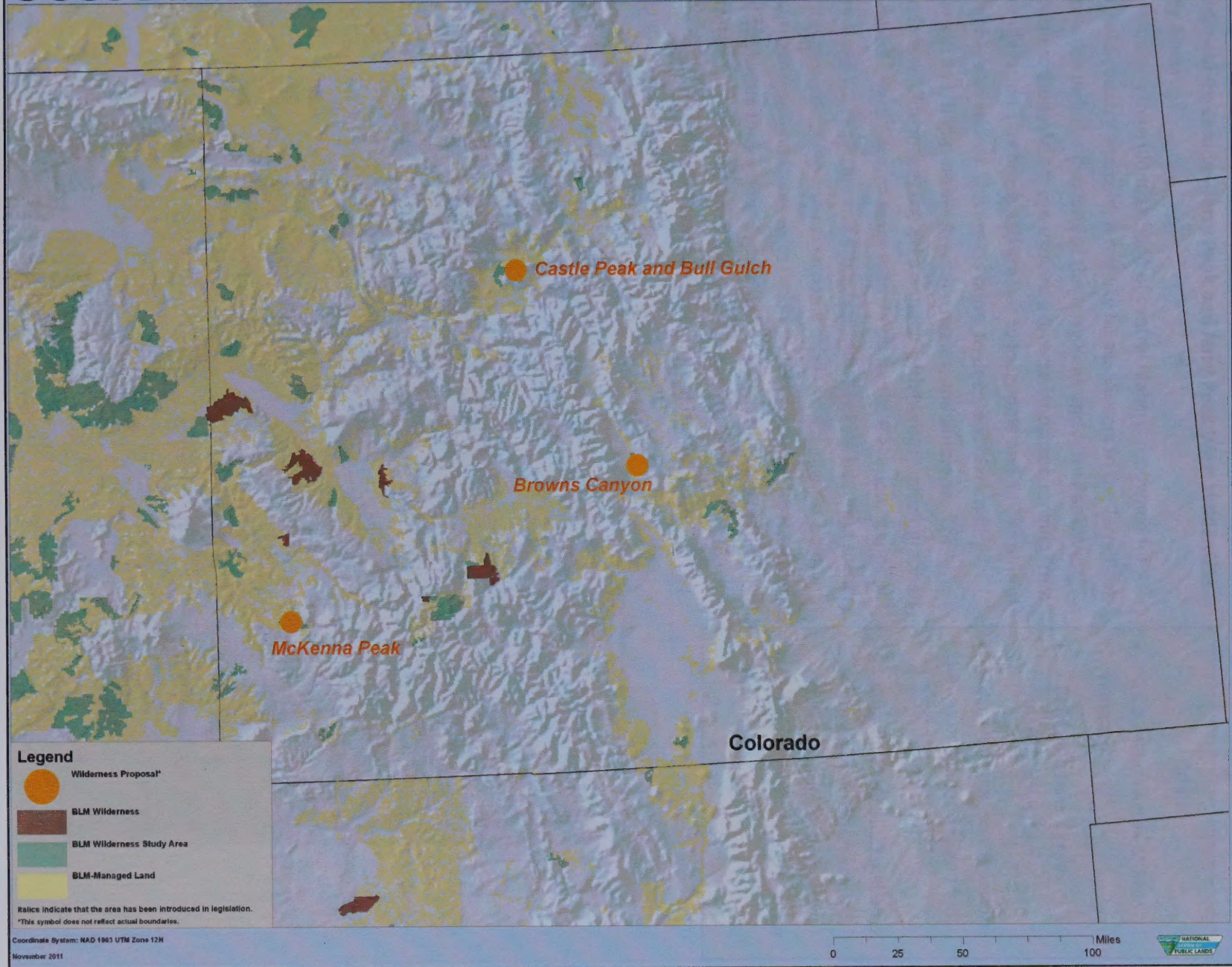
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# Colorado









## Idaho

### Boulder-White Clouds—Jerry Peak and Jerry Peak West Wilderness Study Areas

The Boulder-White Clouds region of central Idaho is renowned for its high, wild country and cold, jewel-like lakes. Visitors to the Jerry Peak area, which includes portions of the Jerry Peak and Jerry Peak West Wilderness Study Areas, can explore a diverse landscape ranging from lower elevation sagebrush and grasses to lodgepole and limber pine at the higher elevations. The area is home to deer, elk, black bear, mountain lion, bighorn sheep, golden eagles, and antelope. The abundant wildlife makes the area popular with hunters, photographers, and hikers. Herd Lake, at more than 7,000 feet in elevation, stands out in the steep rocky terrain and attracts visitors seeking beautiful scenery and the opportunity to fish for rainbow trout. As the highest point in the surrounding landscape, Jerry Peak provides a scenic visual reference point to visitors throughout the area. This area is included in the Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act, H.R.163 (Simpson, R-ID). The BLM testified in support of this proposed designation in June 2010.

#### Idaho

- ~11.5 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup>
- 7 BLM wilderness areas (~500,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- 2 BLM national conservation areas or similar designations (~750,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately \$550 million in annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup>

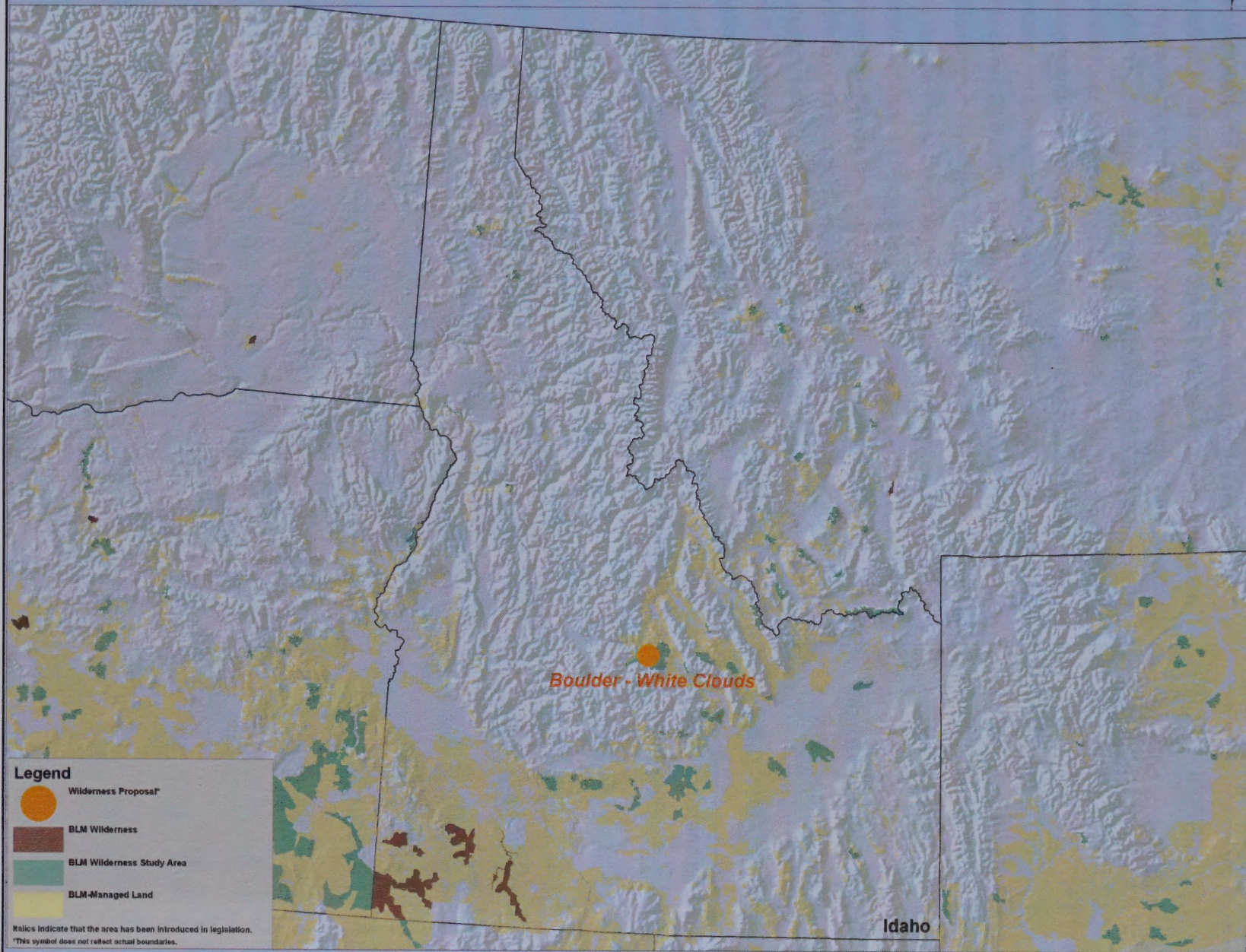









# Idaho



## Legend

-  Wilderness Proposal\*
-  BLM Wilderness
-  BLM Wilderness Study Area
-  BLM-Managed Land

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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12N  
November 2011

Idaho

0 25 50 100 Miles









## Montana

### Sleeping Giant and Sheep Creek Wilderness Study Areas

The adjacent Sleeping Giant and Sheep Creek wilderness study areas are renowned for their scenery, iconic rock formations, and abundant wildlife. The Sleeping Giant area is located along 13 miles of the Missouri River's scenic Holter Lake shoreline, which provides valuable riparian habitat and opportunities for primitive recreation along one of Montana's major recreational waterways. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail follows the river through this area, passing through a wild landscape that looks very much as it did when the explorers first came upon it. The Sheep Creek Wilderness Study Area encompasses partially forested uplands with pronounced drainages that support perennial streams and diverse riparian vegetation. Together, the Sleeping Giant and Sheep Creek wilderness study areas protect a significant expanse of contiguous wildlife habitat, which makes the area popular with hunters, hikers, photographers, and wildlife watchers. An 8-mile interior ridgeline linking existing trailheads with the iconic Sleeping Giant rock formations is particularly popular for hiking and equestrian use. The two areas have long-standing public support for wilderness designation, including from the Lewis and Clark County Commission.

### Montana

- ~8 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup>
- 1 BLM wilderness area (~6,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- 2 BLM national conservation areas or similar designations (~400,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately \$750 million in annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup>





# Montana

## Sleeping Giant and Sheep Creek Wilderness Study Areas

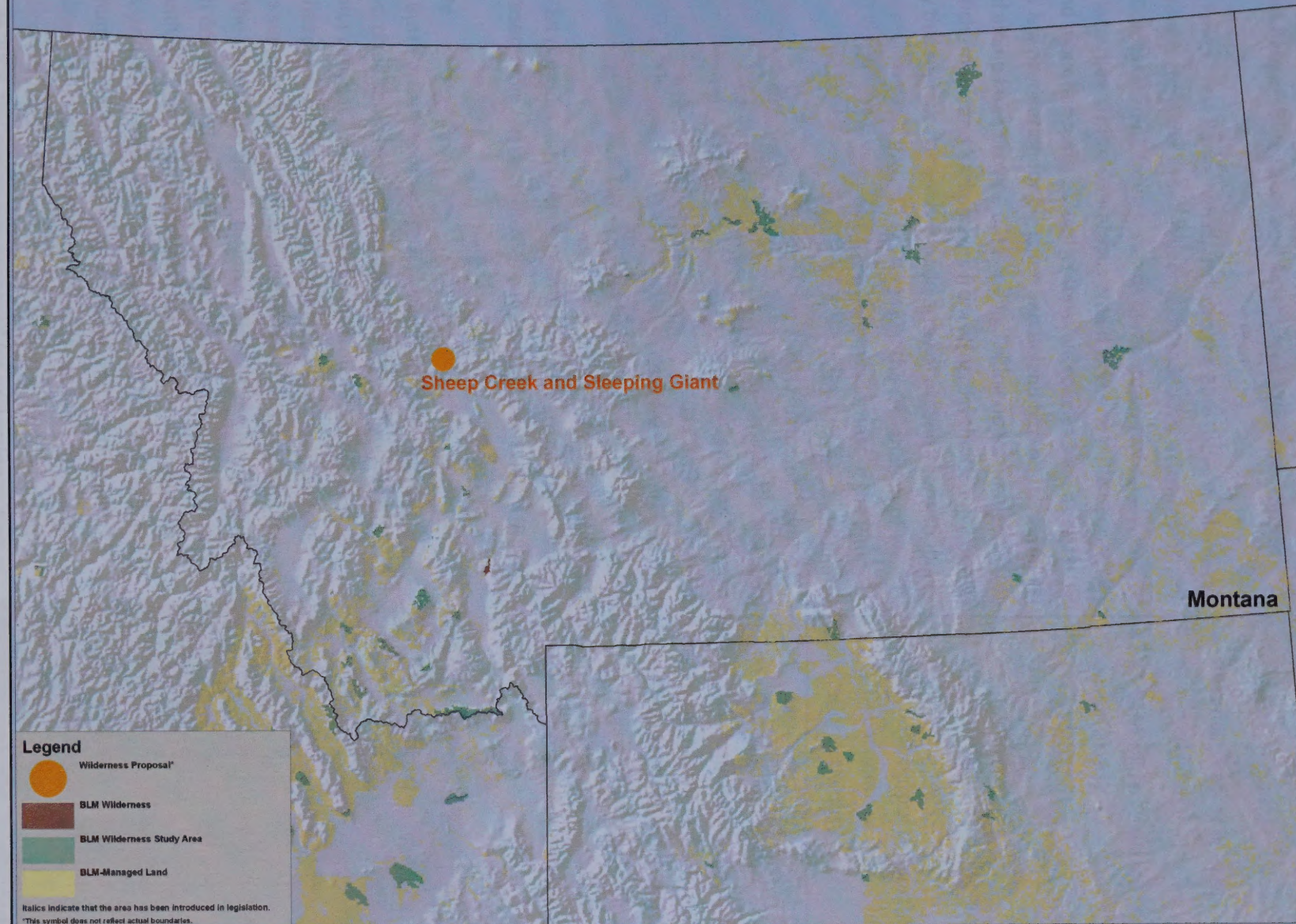
The adjacent Sleeping Giant and Sheep Creek wilderness study areas are proposed for their scenic, historic, and abundant wildlife. The Sleeping Giant area is located along 13 miles of the Missouri River's scenic border Lake shoreline, which provides valuable riparian habitat and opportunities for wildlife migration along one of Montana's most recreational waterways. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail follows the river through this area, passing through a wild landscape that looks very much as it did when the explorers first came upon it. The Sheep Creek Wilderness Study Area encompasses partially forested upland with extensive meadows that support perennial streams and diverse wildlife assemblages. Together, the Sleeping Giant and Sheep Creek wilderness study areas protect a significant expanse of contiguous wildlife habitat, which makes the area popular with hunters, anglers, photographers and wildlife watchers. All 8 miles interior ridge line running between the areas with the iconic Sleeping Giant rock formation is particularly popular for hiking and equestrian use. The two areas have long-standing public support for wilderness designation, including from the Lewis and Clark County Commission.

Montana
• 2.5 million acres of BLM managed land
• 1.5 million acres of private land
• 2.5 million acres of federal land
• 1.5 million acres of state land
• 1.5 million acres of tribal land
• 1.5 million acres of federal land
• 1.5 million acres of state land
• 1.5 million acres of tribal land
• 1.5 million acres of federal land
• 1.5 million acres of state land
• 1.5 million acres of tribal land









# Montana



## Legend

-  Wilderness Proposal\*
-  BLM Wilderness
-  BLM Wilderness Study Area
-  BLM-Managed Land

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November 2011

0 25 50 100 Miles









## Nevada

### Pine Forest Range—Blue Lakes and Alder Creek Wilderness Study Areas

Nevada's Pine Forest Range, which includes the Blue Lakes Wilderness Study Area and the Alder Creek Wilderness Study Area, features stunning blue lakes, pine forests, stands of mountain mahogany, and lush riparian areas. This mountainous area is home to mule deer, eagles, and mountain lions, as well as sensitive species such as sage-grouse. It is a destination for big game and upland bird hunters, and its clear, cold alpine lakes provide outstanding fishing opportunities. Hunters, fishermen, and backpackers from all across the Country use and enjoy this spectacular area. A wide array of organizations support



the designation of wilderness in the Pine Forest Range, including:

the Humboldt County Commission, the Northern Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association, the Northern Nevada ATV Association, the Nevada Cattleman's Association, Trout Unlimited, Back Country Hunters and Anglers, the Nevada Wilderness Project, and Friends of Nevada Wilderness. This area is included in the Pine Forest Range Recreation Enhancement Act of 2011, H.R.

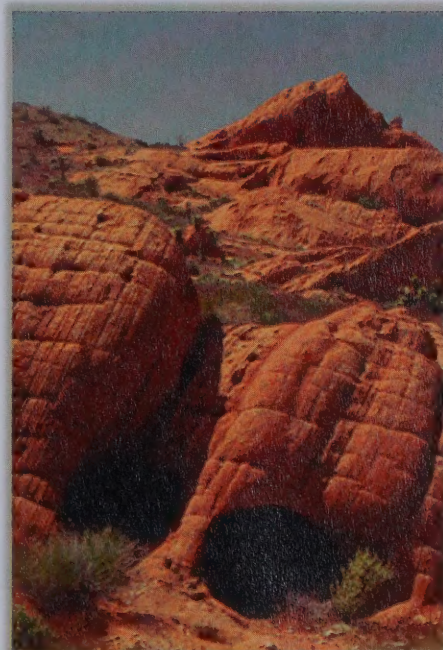
3377/S.1788 (Amodei, R-NV/Reid, D-NV). The bills are co-sponsored by Representative Shelley Berkley (D-NV), Representative Joe Heck (R-NV), and Senator Dean Heller (R-NV).

### Gold Butte

The Gold Butte area in southeastern Nevada includes rugged mountains, tilted sandstone ridges, and braided washes that turn into intricate slot canyons. The area's rocky outcroppings are home to bighorn sheep, mountain lions, and golden eagle aeries. The lower elevations support snakes, lizards, banded Gila monsters, kangaroo rats, and the threatened desert tortoise. Signs of ancient human habitation dot the Gold Butte landscape. Visitors may discover rock shelters with blackened roofs, charcoal remnants, broken pottery, rock tools, and world-renowned petroglyphs. Visitors can also enjoy plentiful hunting, hiking, trail-riding, camping, and photography opportunities. The Clark County Commission supports the creation of a national conservation area and several wilderness designations in this area. In 2008, this region was proposed for protection as part of the Gold Butte National Conservation Area and Wilderness Designation Act (Berkley, D-NV).

### Nevada

- ~48 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup>
- 45 BLM wilderness area (2 million acres)<sup>1</sup>
- 3 BLM national conservation areas (~1 million acres)<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately \$1 billion in annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup>

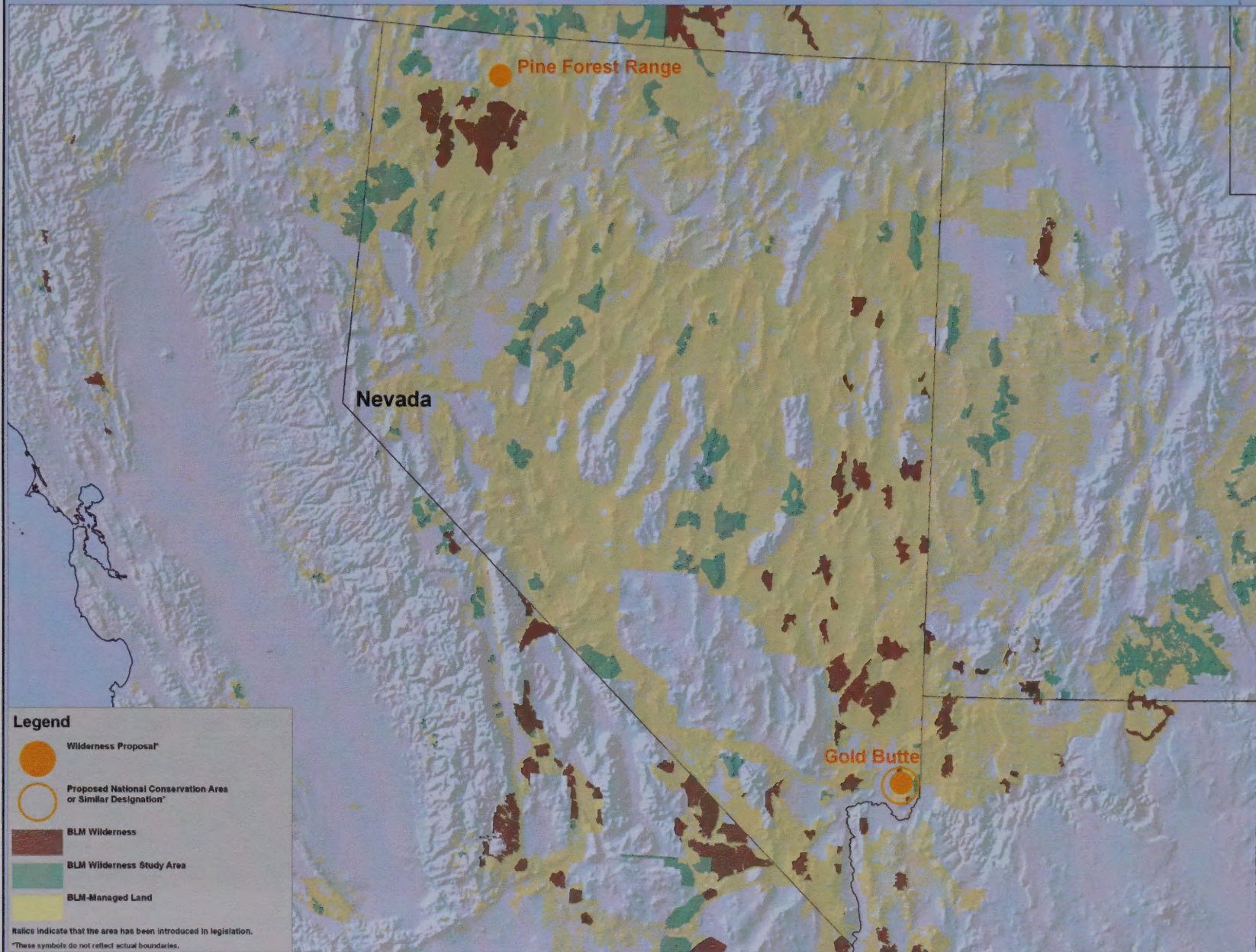













# Nevada



## Legend

-  Wilderness Proposal\*
-  Proposed National Conservation Area or Similar Designation\*
-  BLM Wilderness
-  BLM Wilderness Study Area
-  BLM-Managed Land

*Italics indicate that the area has been introduced in legislation.*

\*These symbols do not reflect actual boundaries.

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12N

November 2011

0 25 50 100 Miles









## New Mexico

### Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area and Wilderness Areas

The proposed Río Grande del Norte National Conservation Area (NCA) is north of Taos, New Mexico, and straddles Taos and Río Arriba Counties. The area includes the Cerro de la Olla, Cerro San Antonio, and Cerro del Yuta volcanic cones, which jut up from the surrounding valley as reminders of the area's turbulent geologic past. Between these mountains, the Río Grande Wild and Scenic River carves through the landscape, revealing ancient basalt flows. Early prehistoric sites document the importance of this area to ancient peoples for hunting and sacred purposes. Abundant wildlife, including bighorn sheep, deer, elk, and antelope, offer opportunities to hunters and wildlife watchers. The blue ribbon trout fishing in the Río Grande and its tributaries draws fishermen from across the Country. Overhead, golden and bald eagles, prairie falcons, and other raptors take to the skies. This area is included in the Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act, H.R.1241/S.667 (Luján, D-NM/Bingaman, D-NM). The proposed Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio wilderness areas are within the proposed national conservation area. In 2009, the Taos County Commission passed a resolution in support of these designations. The BLM testified in support of these designations in May 2011.

#### New Mexico

- ~13.5 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup>
- 5 BLM wilderness areas (~150,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- 4 BLM national conservation areas or similar designations (~300,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately \$350 million in annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup>

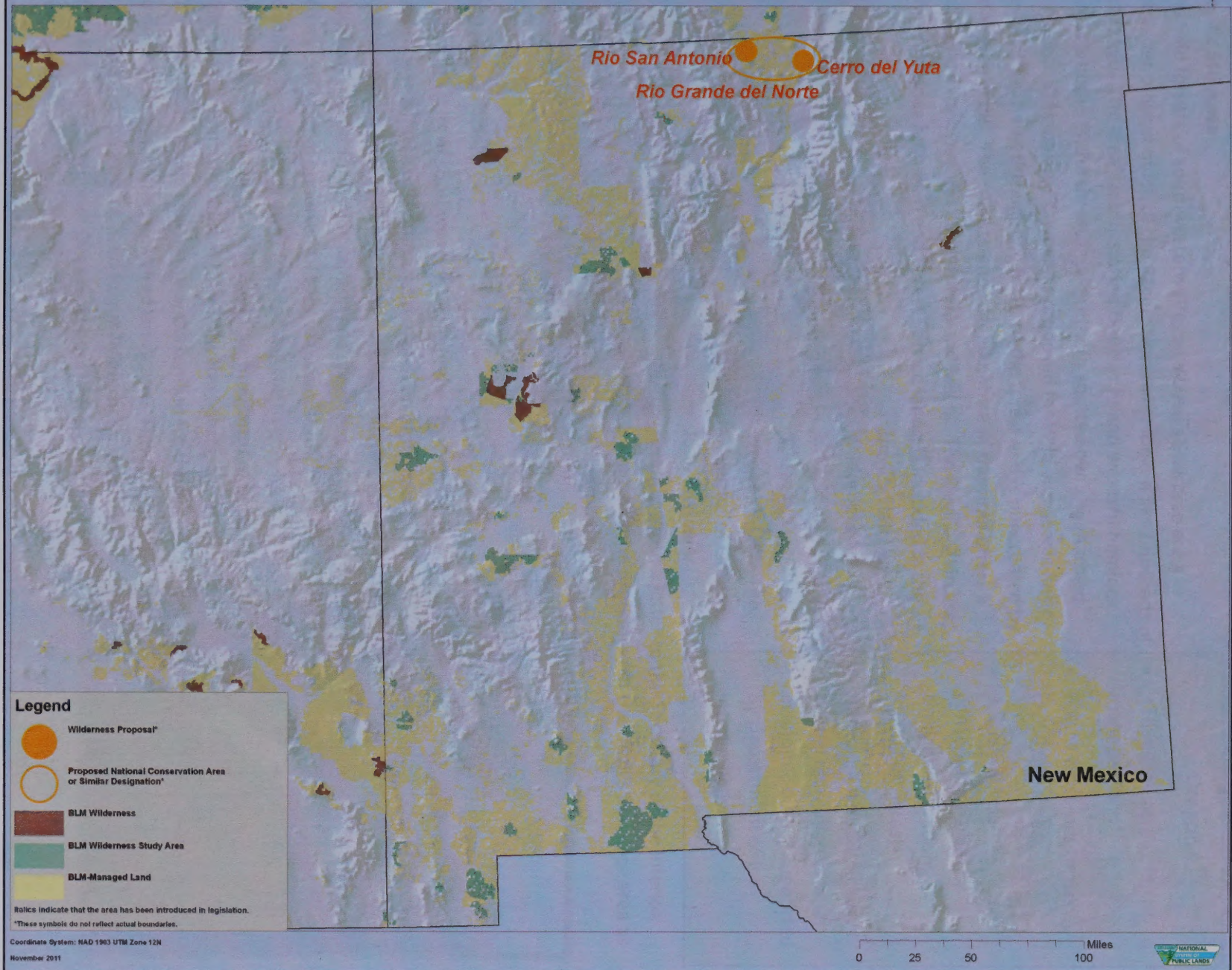








# New Mexico









## Oregon

### Devil's Staircase

The wild forests of southwestern Oregon's Devil's Staircase are a reminder of what much of the Pacific Northwest looked like hundreds of years ago. The area's multi-storied Douglas fir and western hemlock forest is home to the threatened northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet. Wasson Creek, which is proposed for Wild and Scenic River designation, flows through the heart of the forest and is punctuated by small waterfalls. The remote and rugged nature of this area offers a truly wild experience for adventurers and hikers. The Devil's Staircase, which includes both BLM and Forest Service lands, is included in the



Devil's Staircase

Wilderness Act of 2011, H.R.1413/S.766 (DeFazio, D-OR/ Wyden, D-OR). The Governor of Oregon, John Kitzhaber,

recently wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Interior supporting the protection of the Devil's Staircase area as wilderness.

### Oregon

- ~16 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup>
- 8 BLM wilderness areas (~250,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- 3 BLM national conservation areas or similar designations (~500,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately \$1 billion in annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup>

### Wild Rogue

In a remote part of southwestern Oregon, the Rogue Wild and Scenic River winds its way through a rugged and forested expanse of public land. The Rogue's cold, clear waters provide important habitat for Pacific salmon and steelhead trout, as well as exceptional opportunities for whitewater rafting and kayaking. Dense, old-growth forests flank the Rogue, its tributaries, and a healthy watershed that thousands of people explore each year. In addition to whitewater sports, the area offers excellent fishing and hiking opportunities for those looking to experience this untamed landscape. This proposal would expand the existing Wild Rogue Wilderness. John Kitzhaber, the Governor of Oregon, supports designation of this area as wilderness.





# Devil's Staircase

The wild forests of southwestern Oregon's Devil's Staircase are a reminder of what much of the Pacific Northwest looked like hundreds of years ago. The area's multi-storied Douglas fir and western hemlock forest is home to the threatened northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet. Western Creek, which is proposed for Wild and Scenic River designation, flows through the heart of the forest and is punctuated by small waterfalls. The remote and rugged nature of this area offers a truly wild experience for adventure and labor. The Devil's Staircase, which includes both land and forest service lands, is included in the

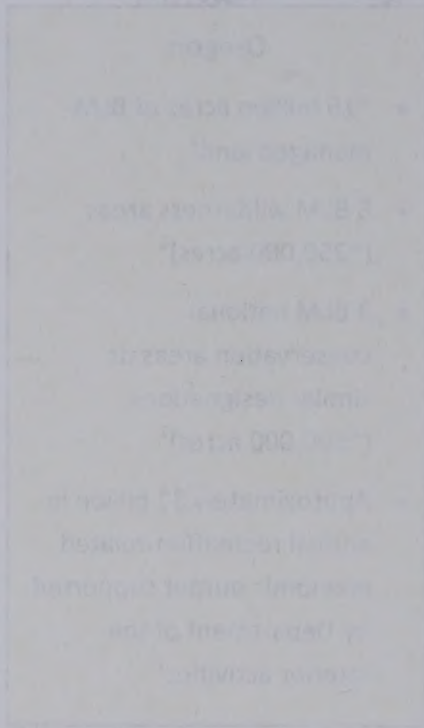
## Devil's Staircase

Wilderness Act of 2011, H.R. 1613, 116th Congress, D-OR. The Oregon Department of Forestry, John Kitchener,

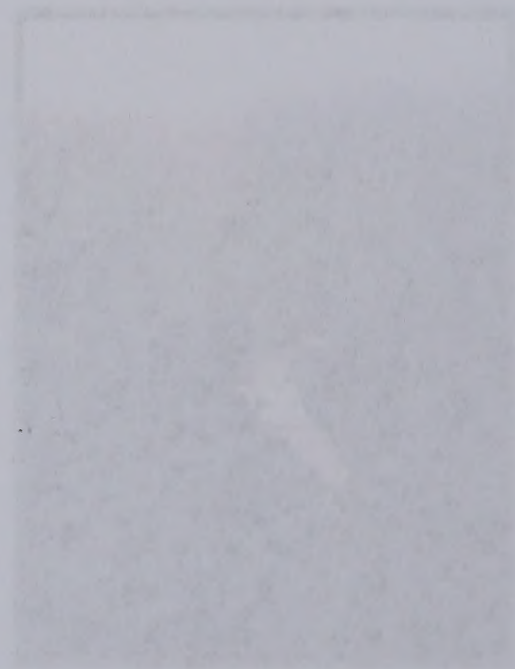


## Wild Forest

In a remote part of southwestern Oregon, the Rogue Wild and Scenic River winds its way through a rugged and forested expanse of public land. The Rogue's cold, clear waters provide the perfect habitat for Pacific salmon and steelhead trout, as well as exceptional opportunities for whitewater rafting and kayaking. During old growth forests from the Rogue, its tributaries, and a healthy watershed that thousands of people explore each year. In addition to whitewater sports, the area offers excellent fishing and hiking opportunities for those looking to experience the unspoiled landscape. The proposal would expand the existing Wild and Scenic River, John Kitchener, the Governor of Oregon, recently designated of the area as wilderness.

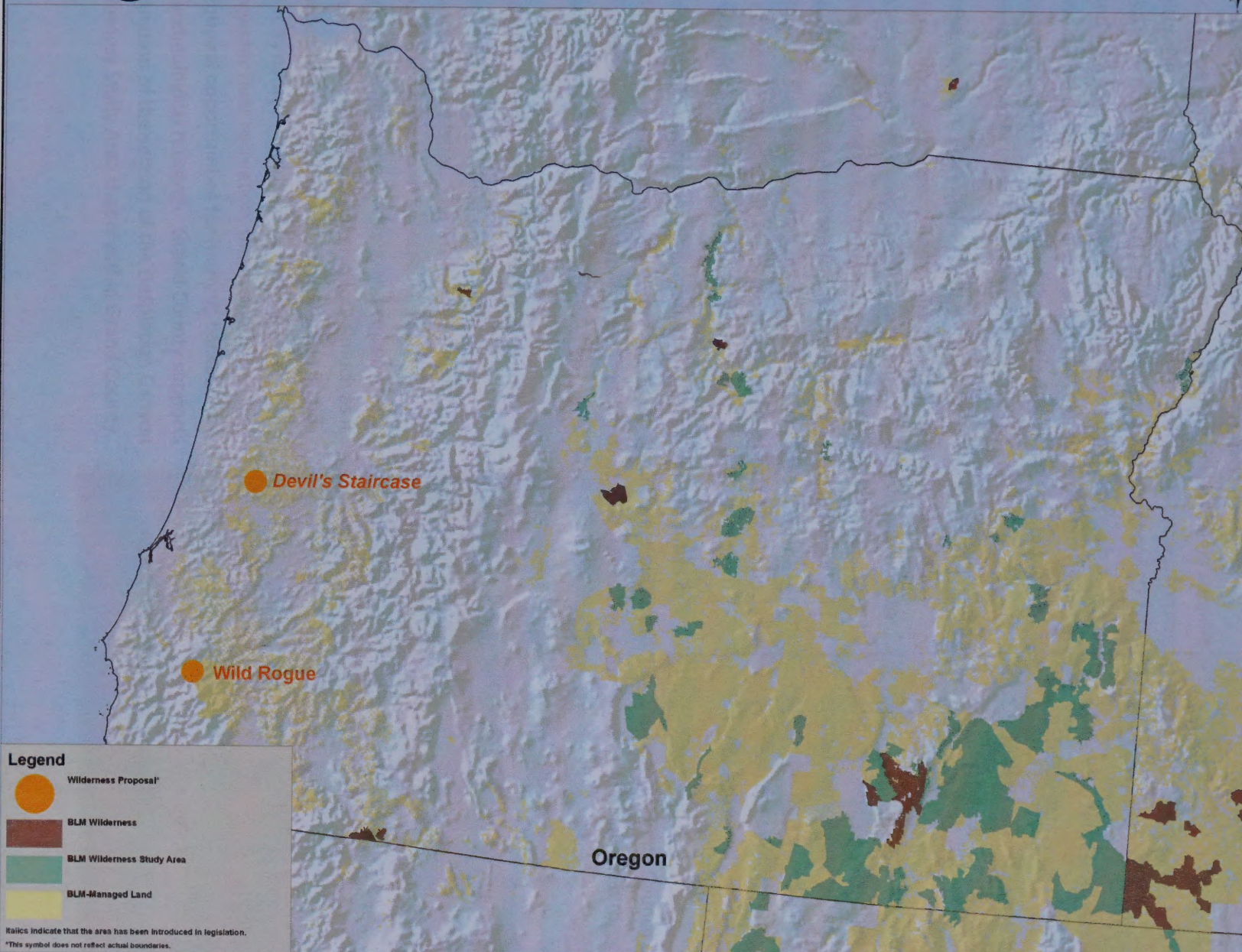


recently wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Interior suggesting the addition of the Devil's Staircase and its wilderness.





# Oregon



## Legend

-  Wilderness Proposal\*
-  BLM Wilderness
-  BLM Wilderness Study Area
-  BLM-Managed Land

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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12N  
November 2011

0 25 50 100 Miles









## Utah

Public lands in Utah are among the Country's most spectacular and iconic. These lands draw visitors from around the world and help support a multi-billion dollar outdoor recreation industry. In recent years, former U.S. Senator Bob Bennett (R-UT) and Congressman Jim Matheson (D-UT) worked with local elected officials and key stakeholders to reach a determination on wilderness study areas and related public land issues in Washington County. The result of these efforts was passage of the Washington County Land Bill as part of P.L.111-11.

There is significant potential, in the near term, to foster additional consensus-focused conservation efforts in Utah. Conversations have been taking place in Emery, San Juan, and Piute Counties about how to resolve longstanding public land issues, including potential wilderness designations. Native American tribes, including the Navajo Nation and the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, have also stepped forward with suggestions for areas deserving protection. These efforts should be actively cultivated and supported.

The opportunities for enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities in Grand County deserve special attention. Based on a multi-year public process, the Grand County Council has put forward a serious proposal for the designation of 11 wilderness areas. Here we have highlighted three of these spectacular areas:

### **Desolation Canyon Wilderness Study Area**

Eastern Utah's Desolation Canyon is an extraordinary treasure. The Green River flows through the canyon, past spectacular rock formations, white sand beaches, and cottonwood groves. This wild and rugged area looks much as it did when John Wesley Powell first explored it and gave it its name. In addition to outstanding whitewater river recreation, this area offers exceptional opportunities for hunting, backpacking, and archeological research. Grand County supports designation of the section of the Desolation Canyon Wilderness Study Area that is within Grand County.

### Utah

- ~23 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup>
- 18 BLM wilderness areas (~250,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- 3 BLM national conservation areas or similar designations (~2 million acres)<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately \$1.7 billion annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup>



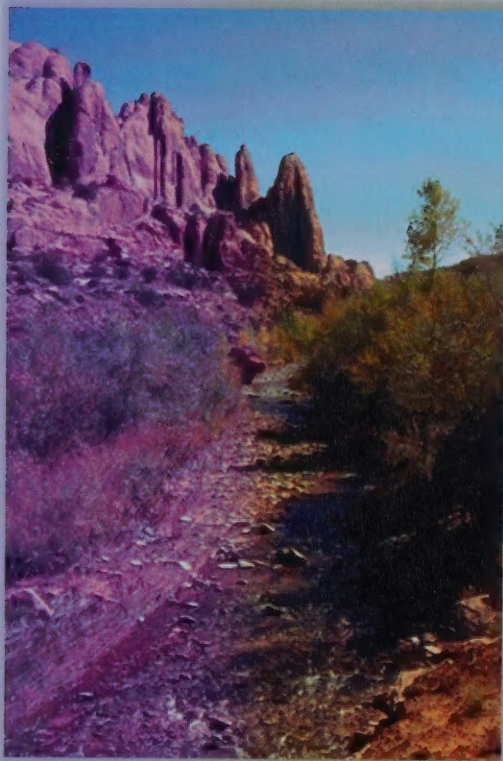






### **Westwater Canyon Wilderness Study Area**

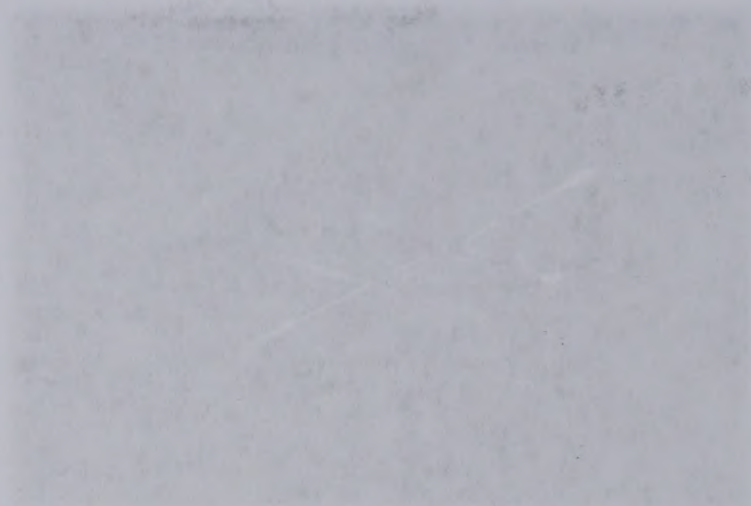
Thirty miles northeast of Moab, Utah, Westwater Canyon offers visitors an accessible opportunity to explore one of the Colorado River's truly wild canyons. The canyon is renowned for its challenging whitewater rapids and memorable desert scenery. The canyon's narrow inner gorge cuts sharply through dense crystalline rocks and is enclosed by the red walls of the wider canyon. In addition to river running, visitors can enjoy hiking, rock scrambling, and primitive camping. Grand County supports the designation of this area.



### **Mill Creek Canyon Wilderness Study Area**

Mill Creek is a perennial stream, which is a rarity in the small canyons of southeast Utah. The area's beauty, as well as its impressive and easily accessible rock art, makes it a popular destination for hikers. The terrain in and around Mill Creek is diverse, ranging from sandstone fins to sheer cliffs. This area also offers outstanding opportunities for camping and backpacking and is readily accessible from Moab. Bird watchers can enjoy sightings of peregrine falcons, bald eagles, and song birds. Grand County supports the designation of this area as wilderness.





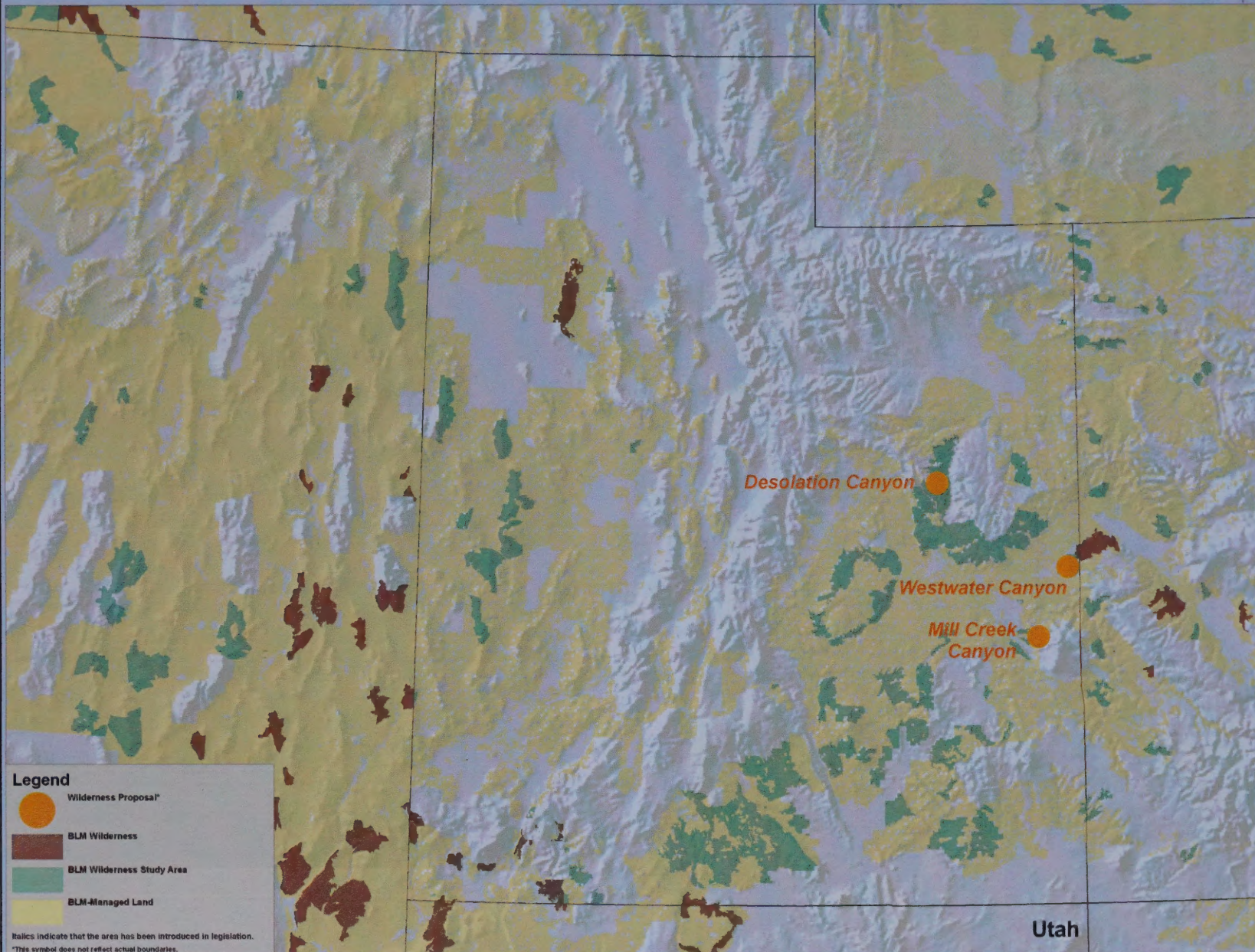
Westwater Canyon Wilderness Study Area  
 Thirty miles northeast of Moab, Utah,  
 Westwater Canyon offers visitors an  
 accessible opportunity to explore one of the  
 Colorado River's truly wild canyons. The  
 canyon is renowned for its challenging  
 whitewater rapids and remarkable desert  
 scenery. The canyon's narrow inner gorge  
 cuts sharply through dense crystalline rock  
 and is fringed by the red walls of the wider  
 canyon. In addition to river running, visitors  
 can enjoy hiking, rock climbing, and  
 primitive camping. Grand County supports  
 the development of the area.

Mill Creek Canyon Wilderness Study Area  
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 impressive and easily accessible rock art makes it a popular  
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 diverse, ranging from sandstone fins to sheer cliffs. This area  
 also offers outstanding opportunities for camping and  
 backpacking and is readily accessible from Moab. Bird watchers  
 can enjoy sightings of golden eagle, bald eagle, and song  
 birds. Grand County supports the development of the area as  
 wilderness.








# Utah



## Legend

-  Wilderness Proposal\*
-  BLM Wilderness
-  BLM Wilderness Study Area
-  BLM-Managed Land

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November 2011

0 25 50 100 Miles









## Washington

### San Juan Islands National Conservation Area

The proposed San Juan Islands National Conservation Area (NCA) includes public land on dozens of islands within the San Juan Archipelago. Located between the mainland of northwestern Washington and Canada's Vancouver Island, the islands' unique cultural and natural resources draw large numbers of regional, national, and international visitors each year. Some of the outstanding resources in this area include undeveloped seashore, rocky outcroppings, grassland prairies, thick forests of Douglas fir, and the archipelago's only freshwater marsh. The BLM also manages a number of historic lighthouses in the area. The proposed national conservation area is included in the San Juan Islands National Conservation Area Act, H.R.2912/S.1559 (Larson, D-WA/Cantwell, D-WA). Support for the NCA designation is both broad and deep in the local community; those who have expressed support include local government officials, businesses, non-profit organizations, and private individuals. The San Juan County Council has twice voted unanimously in support of the NCA designation and identified passage of the NCA legislation as one of its top priorities for 2011. In 2011, the Whatcom County Council unanimously passed a resolution in favor of the NCA designation.

### Washington

- ~400,000 acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup>
- 1 BLM wilderness area (~7,000 acres)<sup>1</sup>
- Washington State does not have any BLM national conservation areas or similar designations<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately \$600 million annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup>









# Washington



San Juan Islands

## Legend



Wilderness Proposal\*



Proposed National Conservation Area  
or Similar Designation\*



BLM Wilderness



BLM Wilderness Study Area



BLM-Managed Land

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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12N

November 2011

Washington

0 25 50 100 Miles







## Alaska & Wyoming

Alaska and Wyoming are home to some of the Nation's most diverse, beautiful, and economically important natural resources. There is significant potential to build on a tradition of conservation and wise management in these states, but additional local dialogue and consensus-building is needed to identify priority areas and resolve key issues.

Alaska	Wyoming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~73 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Alaska does not have any designated BLM wilderness areas<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• 1 BLM national conservation area (~1.2 million acres)<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Approximately \$600 million in annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~18.5 million acres of BLM-managed land<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Wyoming does not have any designated BLM wilderness areas<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Wyoming does not have any BLM national conservation areas or similar designations<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Approximately \$1.2 billion in annual recreation-related economic output supported by Department of the Interior activities<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. 2010. *Public Land Statistics*. Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior. June 2011. *The Department of the Interior's Economic Contributions—June 21, 2011*. Washington, D.C.









THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

NOV 10 2011

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The enclosed report highlights some of the diverse areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that I believe should be considered for congressional designation as national conservation areas or wilderness areas. We have compiled this list of special lands based on input and encouragement from members of Congress, state and county officials, our own land managers, and other interested parties. In all cases, the highlighted areas have significant local support.

This report provides you with a brief introduction to 18 special areas in 9 different states. This is not a complete accounting of public lands that deserve congressional attention. It is a preliminary report that has been generated through the leadership of Deputy Secretary David J. Hayes, BLM Director Bob Abbey, and their staffs. We look forward to continue working with all stakeholders to identify additional areas of BLM lands that deserve protection.

For broader context, the BLM currently manages over 245 million acres of land nationwide, but primarily in the 12 western states. Since the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, Congress has designated approximately 8,700,000 acres of BLM land as wilderness. This equates to roughly 3.5 percent of the land the BLM manages.

These conservation lands play a critical role in keeping local economies healthy and active. Recent reports suggest that outdoor recreation and conservation efforts generate as much as \$1 trillion in annual economic activity, support more than 6.4 million jobs, and provide tens of billions of dollars in local, state, and Federal tax revenue. These are significant contributions that can be further amplified through congressional protection of our most critical areas.

It is my sincere hope that the Senate and the House of Representatives will take action on the proposals found in this report, and other deserving conservation efforts, before the end of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. It is important that we strike a balance that protects our Nation's special lands at the same time that we are initiating major new renewable energy







THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

projects on public lands, keeping our Nation's oil and gas development opportunities robust, and providing critical minerals and other development-focused uses of our public lands.

Sincerely,

*Ken Salazar*  
Ken Salazar

Enclosure

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The enclosed report highlights some of the progress made by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) this year. I believe it should be considered the preeminent designation as national conservation areas in western lands. We have expanded this list of special lands to include, right and wrong, some of the most important, rare and scientifically significant, our own land resources, and other important factors. In all cases, the highlighted areas have significant local impacts.

This report provides a detailed look at the progress made in 15 special areas in 9 different states. This is a comprehensive summary of progress made during the past year. It is a preliminary report that has been prepared through the leadership of Deputy Secretary David J. Hayes, BLM Director Rick Allen, and others. We have formed a working group with all stakeholders in order to address some of the BLM's most important priorities.

The BLM manages the 11.6 million acres of public lands in the western states. Under the management of the BLM, the Act of 1906, the BLM has designated approximately 8.7 million acres of BLM land as wilderness. This equates to roughly 75 percent of the land in the BLM's management.

These conservation lands play a critical role in supporting our nation's health and safety. Recent reports suggest that outdoor recreation and other land uses generate as much as \$1 trillion in annual economic activity, support 10 million jobs, and provide up to \$1 billion in total tax revenue each year. These are significant contributions that can be further enhanced through the protection of our most critical areas.

It is my sincere hope that the Senate and the House of Representatives will take action on the proposed BLM report, and other deserving conservation efforts, before the end of the 112th Congress. It is important that we take a balanced approach to our Nation's special lands in the same way that we are taking on other key, non-able issues.



projects on public lands, keeping our jobs and our development opportunities  
robust, and providing critical minerals and other development-focused uses of our public  
lands.

Sincerely,

*Ken Salazar*  
Ken Salazar





THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

NOV 10 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

The enclosed report highlights some of the diverse areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that I believe should be considered for congressional designation as national conservation areas or wilderness areas. We have compiled this list of special lands based on input and encouragement from members of Congress, state and county officials, our own land managers, and other interested parties. In all cases, the highlighted areas have significant local support.

This report provides you with a brief introduction to 18 special areas in 9 different states. This is not a complete accounting of public lands that deserve congressional attention. It is a preliminary report that has been generated through the leadership of Deputy Secretary David J. Hayes, BLM Director Bob Abbey, and their staffs. We look forward to continue working with all stakeholders to identify additional areas of BLM lands that deserve protection.

For broader context, the BLM currently manages over 245 million acres of land nationwide, but primarily in the 12 western states. Since the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, Congress has designated approximately 8,700,000 acres of BLM land as wilderness. This equates to roughly 3.5 percent of the land the BLM manages.

These conservation lands play a critical role in keeping local economies healthy and active. Recent reports suggest that outdoor recreation and conservation efforts generate as much as \$1 trillion in annual economic activity, support more than 6.4 million jobs, and provide tens of billions of dollars in local, state, and Federal tax revenue. These are significant contributions that can be further amplified through congressional protection of our most critical areas.

It is my sincere hope that the Senate and the House of Representatives will take action on the proposals found in this report, and other deserving conservation efforts, before the end of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. It is important that we strike a balance that protects our Nation's special lands at the same time that we are initiating major new renewable energy



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

NOV 10 2011



The Honorable Tim Wirth  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20540

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The enclosed report highlights some of the diverse areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that I believe should be considered for congressional designation as national conservation areas or refuges. We have compiled this list of special areas based on a review and management plan of the BLM's state and county offices, our own land management and other interested parties. In all cases, the report was prepared by the BLM's local offices.

This report provides you with a brief introduction to 15 special areas in 4 different states. These areas are located in public lands that deserve congressional attention. It is a preliminary report that has been prepared through the leadership of the Secretary David L. Hayes, BLM's Assistant Secretary, and their staff. We look forward to continue working with all stakeholders to identify additional areas of BLM lands that deserve protection.

For broader context, the BLM currently manages over 265 million acres of land nationwide, but primarily in the 12 western states. Since the passage of the Antiquities Act in 1906, Congress has designated approximately 8,700,000 acres of BLM land as wilderness. This amounts to roughly 3.5 percent of the total BLM lands.

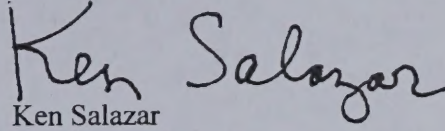
These areas are in lands that play a critical role in keeping local economies healthy and strong. Recent reports suggest that outdoor recreation and conservation efforts generate as much as \$1 billion in annual economic activity, support more than 6.4 million jobs, and provide tens of billions of dollars in local, state, and Federal tax revenue. These are significant contributions that can be further amplified through congressional protection of our most critical areas.

It is my sincere hope that the Senate and the House of Representatives will take action on the proposals found in this report, and other deserving conservation efforts, before the end of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. It is in part that we share a balance that protects our Nation's special lands in the same time that we are initiating major new renewable energy



projects on public lands, keeping our Nation's oil and gas development opportunities robust, and providing critical minerals and other development-focused uses of our public lands.

Sincerely,

  
Ken Salazar

Enclosure

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
1000 G ST., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20090



to provide an public lands, helping our nation's oil and gas development opportunities  
to protect and providing natural resources and other important interests of our public  
lands.

Sincerely,

Ken Salazar  
Ken Salazar

BLM Library  
Denver Federal Center  
Bldg. 50, OC-521  
P.O. Box 25047  
Denver, CO 80225